

June 2010

The New ‘Freedom Fighters’

by Alan Van Zelfden



Wayne Nugent, Chief Visionary Officer, and Mike Azcue, CEO, WorldVentures

Travel is the world’s largest industry, bringing in more than \$8 trillion annually. Fueled by baby boomers, the industry’s growth rate is expected to double within six years. One network marketing company is riding the trend to corporate success.

Every eight seconds, a member of a generation known for redefining traditional American values retires. Economists have likened the sheer size of this baby boom demographic to a bulge—or “a pig in a python”—that dramatically affects society, socially and economically, as it matriculates.

Countless business articles chronicle the economic impact the 78 million American baby boomers are having on the world’s industries. But perhaps nowhere does their impact leave more of an indelible footprint than within the travel industry.

Rivalry within the industry is rife, especially as the world struggles under the burden of a poor economy. Despite the dire times, the suburban Dallas-based WorldVentures is making its mark, weighing in with scale and a growing brand equity that emphasizes a freedom to live a life free of the daily hassles.

Although the global online travel company with a growing salesforce of independent representatives is only 5 years old, it has tapped into a leisure travel trend that promises to become the dominant global industry. What is particularly enticing about its business model is that leisure travel is a concept that strikes a responsive chord not only with boomers, but also with every generation.

And, to think, the corporate venture started over sandwiches at a local deli.

“You have these different aspects of who you are—spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and financial; travel really can enhance all those things.”

**—Wayne Nugent,
WorldVentures, Co-
Founder and Chief
Visionary Officer**

The Lunch That Launched a Dream

When Wayne Nugent and Mike Azcue met for lunch that fateful summer day in 2005, neither quite realized what the meeting would bring. Nugent and Azcue were longtime friends who had dabbled in network marketing for separate companies over the years. They both yearned for personal fulfillment that had been oddly missing from their many extremely successful business endeavors.

As they nibbled on sandwiches at Jason's Deli in suburban Dallas, Nugent mapped out his vision for what he thought would be the perfect opportunity. The travel industry, he reasoned, was in the midst of a paradigm shift. Once the province of brick-and-mortar storefronts, travel bookings had fled like lemmings to the Internet. Couple that migration with travel evolving as the world's largest industry, and you had the proverbial perfect storm.

As the breadth of the opportunity before them began to sink in, the friends' pulses raced. This newfound company concept wouldn't just provide access to travel. It would assemble DreamTrips to exotic locations around the world and offer the packages at drastically discounted rates. And what better way to bring this idea to the world, one person at a time, than through network marketing—the same business model that had launched each of the men's careers.

Nearly winded by their excited discussion of the proposed “Mary Kay of travel,” the friends came to a mutual “I could have had a V8” moment: “We'd be crazy not to start a company together.”

There are probably no two better people capable of bringing such an aspiring, one-of-a-kind business plan to life than Nugent and Azcue. Each has had remarkable success in building powerful direct sales organizations from scratch.

The two were now about to embark on a mutual business adventure that they believed would forever change an industry and the lives of people around the world.

Stressing the Point

There's a serial killer stalking our planet. It's menacing, and it's deadly. Its name is stress, and it's on a first-name basis with many of us. With unemployment skyrocketing, foreclosures doubling and the world economic foundation teetering on a precipice, it's no wonder that stress has become a corrosive stew eating at us from the inside out.

That's where the good doctors of WorldVentures help. What better way to get away from it all than to, well, get away from it all? Vacations have a wonderful way of recharging the spirit, soothing the soul and taking the cork out of our stress-laden, fizzed-up psyches.

WorldVentures is more of a lifestyle provider than a travel company.

“You have these different aspects of who you are—spiritually, physically, emotionally, intellectually and financially,” Nugent says. “Travel really can enhance all those things. The people who have done it, they are making a living... living.”

In this respect, WorldVentures is more of a lifestyle provider than a travel company. It uses travel—something just about everyone enjoys—as a platform to advance health and wellness, so to speak.

Enter the DreamTrips concept. Incorporating the big-box approach immortalized by the likes of Sam's Club, WorldVentures uses its buying leverage to build relationships with travel wholesalers, hoteliers and airlines, all of whom covet the idea of mass marketing to WorldVentures' tens of thousands of potential travelers. That means the company can offer trips to some of the dreamiest vacation spots at prices that they say are well below what is offered by competitors.

Here's how it works. DreamTrips are open to members only. But becoming a member is easy. Pay a one-time registration fee and small monthly fees, and you're in like Flynn. The fees qualify anyone in the family—spouse,

significant other, guest or dependent children—to take advantage of any of the hundreds of DreamTrips offered annually. Members can save up to \$1,000—and sometimes more—compared to the same trip offered by a competitor.

The company recently introduced the Luxury DreamTrips membership. In addition to being able to access all DreamTrips, the Luxury membership offers finer vacation packages to elite destinations worldwide.

And for those who fancy the idea of starting their own home-based travel business, WorldVentures offers them the opportunity to become a Leisure Travel Consultant. An LTC accesses the same powerful travel database the company uses to offer its discounted vacation packages. Depending on how involved they want to become, LTCs can earn from 50 to 80 percent of the commissions paid for setting up customers with trips.

The LTC is a hybrid travel program that provides an opportunity for individuals to increase their earnings potential in the travel industry. Basic, moderate and advanced training is provided, depending upon the LTC level an individual wants to obtain.

All in all, WorldVentures has tapped into an intergalactic dynamo of a trend. Travel is the world's largest industry, bringing in more than \$8 trillion annually. Fueled by baby boomers, who are retiring at a rate of one every eight seconds, the industry's growth rate is expected to double within six years. CNN Money lists travel as the single-largest category of e-commerce on the planet.

The bottom line: Encouraging people to live their dreams.

“WorldVentures is a personal-development company disguised as a travel company,” says Chief Strategy Officer Eddie Head. “Everyone has a dream about how they would like to live their life. We help them act on those dreams. We're in the business of helping others make their work their pleasure—right now, not some time in the future.”

Build It, and They Will Come

There's a quiet revolution occurring on the nation's college campuses. Its ranks comprise graduating seniors and others in the early to mid-20s who are beginning to think that the proverbial American Dream is something of a bygone generation. Known colloquially as “millennials,” they're facing the worst job market in decades. And they're dead frightened about their prospects.

Sarah Martinez, 24, was once a member of this growing, disenfranchised youth. She particularly remembers her senior year at the University of Denver. To earn additional income for school, she worked part time at a local amusement park. One August day in 2007, a co-worker left behind a magazine in the office that featured WorldVentures.

Martinez was intrigued by the articles of average people who, after years of struggling in dead-end careers, found fulfillment in getting paid to travel. Getting paid to travel? That sounded interesting. She introduced the idea to her boyfriend, Brian Brown. The two of them joined as WorldVentures representatives, attended one of the company's Leadership Acceleration Workshops and became hooked.

“This is it,” they realized during the workshop. “This is what we've been waiting for.”

Within months, Martinez convinced her family—mother, father, two brothers and a sister—to join. Her father became so successful, he recently closed his law practice to work WorldVentures full time.

But the most phenomenal aspect of Martinez joining the organization is the astonishing success she and Brown have had introducing the WorldVentures concept to their college classmates. Today, hundreds of college students

and recent graduates from a growing list of universities have joined the RAT Pack—“Retired at Twenty.” Martinez and Brown have become the youngest marketing directors in WorldVentures’ history.

“We were faced with three options after graduating,” Brown says. “We could become an employee, start our own business or get into network marketing. With the WorldVentures network marketing opportunity, we saw that those who were successful in the organization had the time, they had the freedom, and they were helping others enjoy the same lifestyle.”

Doing Business Belly to Belly

WorldVentures places heavy emphasis on training and development of their people. Even though the advent of the Internet has made booking travel easy and convenient, there’s still the element of working one on one with prospective customers to build loyalty.

“People are not brand loyal when it comes to travel; they’re price loyal.”

**—Eddie Head,
WorldVentures
Chief Strategy Officer**

“Our membership base allows that belly-to-belly interaction,” Head says. “That’s where business is done. These days, people are not brand loyal when it comes to travel; they’re price loyal. Our overriding goal is to give our representatives thorough training in the nuts and bolts of working the business, building their leadership skills, and achieving a balanced lifestyle that will engender success and happiness.”

Every year, WorldVentures holds up to a dozen Regional Training Events throughout the United States. The daylong events are hosted by the organization’s best national trainers with help from local up-and-coming field leaders. Representatives receive all the training to help them hit the ground running with their new entrepreneurial endeavors.

To help representatives approach their newfound business with a holistic balance, the company offers a five-day Journey workshop in which participants are encouraged to develop parity among the familial, financial, physical, spiritual, social and emotional aspects of their life. The workshop offers self-discovery conducive to personal development and achieving closer personal relationships with others.

One of its more unique offerings is A View from the Edge. In this three-day, full-production theatrical experience, the company’s chief trainer, Marc Accetta, performs a series of one-person plays in which his characters impart valuable life lessons and business common sense. Whether playing a character from The Mask to illustrate how self-confidence and posture are important when talking to prospects, or playing an ICU patient discussing the importance of living in the moment, Accetta emphasizes important messages that put life in perspective.

The future looks bright for WorldVentures. Its domestic sales base is growing, as is its current operations in the United Kingdom, Kenya, South Africa, Botswana, Singapore, Israel, Cyprus and Malta. The company plans to open another half- dozen countries by year’s end.

In the end, it all comes down to encouraging others to dream again, to shake off a lifetime of self-doubt and of thinking that success is never to be theirs. WorldVentures wants to build a movement, to become a worldwide agent for change. As the Field of Dreams adage goes: “Sometimes, when you believe the impossible, the incredible comes true.”